

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,
Building 68
(Cavalry Stable)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-L

HABS
IOWA,
77-DESMO,
24-L-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building No. 68. Stable

This structure stood almost directly south of Building No. 66 and consisted of a stable barn for cavalry mounts. Completed on February 24, 1905, at a cost of \$14,843.10, the building rested on a limestone water table foundation and had brick walls and a slate roof. Mortar was red-pigmented and brick was laid in running bond. The building conformed to plan 139 in the Quartermaster General's Office. Dimensions of the structure were 67 feet wide by 165 feet long and it had a gabled roof with a monitor at the ridge. On the exterior, sixteen 6-over-6 light double hung windows ran along the side walls. Openings had 3-course segmental arches, and windows had plain lug limestone sills. Sliding doors were in front and rear, along with five double hung windows situated at either end. On the inside, containing 10,556 square feet, the floors were of wood, brick, cement, and clay. Rooms were as follows:

First floor:

Stable room, 64' 10" x 162' 10" (including 4 rooms, 9' 8" x 10' 7";
1 room, 19' 6" x 32')

Loft:

Room, 41' 4" x 44' 6" (including 1 room, 9' 8" x 19' 6")

The structure, heated by stove, also was equipped with electrical lighting. It contained 15,516 cubic feet, with capacity for ninety horses, and had water and sewer connections. Repairs between 1905 and 1921 appear to have been minimal, amounting to only about \$19.00 per year. In 1935 this structure and Building No. 70, also a stable, were connected by a covered frame runway measuring 20 feet wide by 72 feet long and costing \$2,484.30. That year the stable served as a temporary warehouse by the CCC, a function that apparently continued into the early 1940s.

In the period following its service as a horse stable, Building No. 68 underwent certain modifications. In 1942 a rear addition 66 feet 6 inches wide by 53 feet long was erected to house lavatory, shower, and toilet facilities for the WAACs when the building was converted into a barracks. The addition rested on a concrete foundation. Windows had 2-course segmental arch openings with brick rowlock sills. Walls are of brick arranged in common bond. On the rear of the addition double steel doors and a loading dock were constructed. On the gable was a louvered ventilator. A heating plant was erected on the southeast side of the addition, while a brick covered walkway replaced the frame construction between Buildings 68 and 70. A firewall projected through the roof of the walkway. Two windows and one door were placed on either side of the firewall.

Since that time other changes have occurred. On the west side, the double door at the midway point has been bricked in and changed to a window. The 4-course segmental arch above the old doorway is still present. On the north end of the building the loft entrance was bricked in and a door was converted to a window at the west side of the end. At the east side of the north end modern double doors have been installed. The roof is now of asphalt shingles and the monitor windows are covered with the same. In 1987 the structure was vacant and in fair condition.(26)

26. Card for Building No. 68. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box 51. QMG Plan No. 39 was not located in NA, Cartographic Archives Division; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987.